

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSSTATE WASHDC 8406
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3669

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, IZ, KU
SUBJECT: KUWAIT-IRAQI BORDER TALKS CONCLUDE: HOPE
BUT SKEPTICISM

REF: KUWAIT 3362 (NOTAL)

1. KUWAITI DEFMIN/INTMIN SHAIKH SA'AD AL-ABDULLA
RETURNED HOME FROM BAGHDAD JULY 3 AFTER BILATERAL
TALKS ON BORDER MATTERS WITH IRAQI INT MIN AL-DURI,
AND CHATS WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN AND PRES. AL-BAKR.
HE REPORTEDLY INVITED THE LATTER TO VISIT KUWAIT,
ON BEHALF OF THE AMIR, WHICH INVITATION WAS
ACCEPTED. THE BORDER TALKS ORIGINALLY WERE
SCHEDULED TO LAST FOUR DAYS, BUT WERE STRETCHED TO
SEVEN DAYS (JUNE 27-JULY 3) BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT.
DURING THIS TIME THE TWO INT MINS ALSO INSPECTED
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THE BORDER NEAR UM QASR BY HELICOPTER, AND THEY
REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED PHYSICAL DEMARCATION OF THE
FRONTIER, ALONG WITH KUWAITI CHIEF OF STAFF
GENERAL MUBARAK, WHO FLEW IN FOR THE INSPECTION.

2. ON JULY 3, SHAIKH SA'AD GAVE A STATEMENT TO THE
PRESS WHICH EMPHASIZED GOOD RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AND

REVEALED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD AGREED, QUOTE:

A. TO FORM A MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FROM THE TWO COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW UP THE DISCUSSIONS AND EFFORTS AIMED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF BORDERS AND TO DEVELOP BILATERAL RELATIONS. THIS COMMITTEE WILL HOLD PERIODIC MEETINGS ALTERNATELY IN BAGHDAD AND KUWAIT AT CLOSE AND REGULAR INTERVALS.

B. THE TWO SIDES WILL MOVE AWAY (SIC) FROM CERTAIN INTRUDING POSTS WITHIN THE KUWAIT-IRAQI BORDER AREA.

C. TO FORM A COMMITTEE FROM THE OFFICIALS OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRIES IN THE TWO COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW UP AND SOLVE DAILY PROBLEMS WHICH MAY CROP UP ALONG THE BORDERS. UNQUOTE.

3. DURING THE TALKS, KUWAITI SOURCES, INCLUDING THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR IN BAGHDAD, REPORTEDLY TOLD THE PRESS THAT IRAQ WAS PULLING BACK SOME FORCES WHICH HAD BEEN "CAMPING" ON KUWAITI TERRITORY.

4. COMMENT: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IRAQI-KUWAITI COMMITTEES TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS IS A HOPEFUL SIGN ABOUT WHICH THE GOK HAS REASON TO BE PLEASED. THERE REMAINS, HOWEVER, MUCH TO BE DONE, AND WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE RESIDUAL SKEPTICISM ON THE KUWAITI SIDE ABOUT IRAQI
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INTENTIONS TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS TOWARD DEMARCATION OF THE LAND BORDER AND SETTLEMENT OF TRADITIONAL DIFFERENCES OVER THE ISLANDS OF WARBAH AND BUBIYAN, AT THE MOUTH OF THE KHOR ABDALLAH. THE KUWAITIS NO DOUBT WOULD BE VERY HAPPY ABOUT IRAQI TROOP WITHDRAWALS AND ANXIOUS TO PROCEED WITH DEMARCATION, BUT WE WOULD WAGER THAT KUWAIT HAS PAID OR WILL PAY A PRICE FOR THESE. A POSSIBLE INITIAL KUWAITI RESPONSE TO IRAQI MOVEMENT ON THESE ISSUES WOULD BE THE OPENING OF THE LAND BORDER TO TRANSIT BY KUWAITI CITIZENS, WHICH IRAQ (ESPECIALLY BASRA) OFFICIALS SEEM TO WANT BADLY.
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